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Statement of Mike Mansfield

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001

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June 27, 1960
Monday

STATEMENT OF SENATOR MIKE MANSFIELD (D., MONTANA)
Helena, Montana

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My fellow Democrats -- My fellow Montanans:

I ^{would have been} ~~am~~ ^{had} delighted and honored to have the privilege of introducing
because of pressing legislative problems in Washington, especially tomorrow, will
the man who ~~will~~ give the keynote address to our Democratic State Convention. not
be
able
to

I have served with him in both the House and Senate for almost
two decades. I consider him one of my closest friends and one of the
best friends Montana has ever had.

I think I can speak with some degree of knowledge when I discuss
this man's abilities, his responsibilities and his devotion to duty. I
have read statements of others relative to his position on labor, but
this I know firsthand. It was Lyndon Johnson who urged and forced the
conferees on the part of the Senate last year to go back, time and time
again, into conference so that the best possible compromise between the
Senate bill and the Landrum-Griffin bill could be achieved. In my opinion,

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Labor has Lyndon Johnson to thank for the fact that we do not, today, have, as the law of the land, the Landrum-Griffin bill, a thoroughly obnoxious measure.

I have heard my friend referred to with disdain as a Southerner.

Well, I don't know whether he ought to be called a Southerner, a Westerner or a South-westerner. But I am shocked that some people go so far as to show their bigotry by judging ^a ~~the~~ man on the basis of the religion he adheres to or the section of the country from which he comes. May I remind you that under the Constitution there are no religious, there are no sectional qualifications laid down. May I urge you to take to heart the wisdom of the founding fathers in drawing up the Constitution so that we can show ourselves, if not as wise, at least as tolerant today as they were over 180 years ago.

If it were not for Lyndon Johnson we would not have Civil Rights legislation on the books today. Above anyone else and above any group, he is primarily responsible for the fact that we do have two Civil Rights bills as the law of the land at the present time.

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One other thing I would like to point out is that in the dying days of the 85th Congress, almost two years ago, it was Lyndon Johnson who singlehandedly saved the Supreme Court from having its powers diluted and its authority threatened under the Smith Act, which had passed the House of Representatives and failed of passage by only one vote in the Senate.

I know whereof I speak because I daresay that no one has been closer than I have to Lyndon Johnson over the past 4 years. I work a 12 to 14 hour day. He works a 16 to 20 hour day.

He has been accused of many things which are not true. He has been accused of one thing which is true. He has been accused of representing the interest of his state and he is guilty. I, likewise, have been accused of representing the interest of Montana and I am guilty. It is a fact and it ought to be recognized that Senators--all Senators--wear two hats. We are Senators from the State which we represent and we are also Senators of the United States. As far as I am concerned, and I know I speak for practically every other Senator, I intend to continue to look

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after the interests of my state whether they be related to problems affecting natural resources such as oil, gas or minerals; whether they be related to problems affecting natural resources development; whether they be related to problems affecting wheat, sugar beets, sheep, cattle or any other agricultural commodity.

May I say, incidentally, that the American farmer has had no better friend than Lyndon Johnson. He has consistently gone down the line in the interest of our farm economy and he has worked shoulder to shoulder with Hubert Humphrey all the way on legislation of this kind.

As the Majority Leader of the United States Senate for the past 6 years, Lyndon Johnson has had a tremendous job and a great responsibility. You know leadership in this government is not supposed to be a one-man job. The President is supposed to carry the burden of it. Every Committee chairman in both Houses of Congress has a part of it. So, too, has every individual Member of both the Senate and the House.

If you really want to find out what kind of a job Lyndon Johnson has done as the Majority Leader of the Senate measure his contribution

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as a part of that total. He has been in the Senate day-after-day, as I told you, working 16 to 20 hours. For himself? For the advancement of his own political future? No. To get legislation passed that needs to be passed. To stop legislation like the Landrum-Griffin bill, that needs to be stopped.

His job is not easy. It entails working out a harmony between 64 prima donnas--65 including himself--who comprise the democratic membership of the Senate. It entails bringing this harmony to bear on the Republican choir on the other side of the aisle. I can assure you that that is a lot of sound for one man to handle.

His job entails bringing to the Floor, once it has been reported out of committee, legislation and getting it acted upon. Lyndon Johnson did not make the Senate rules but it is his job to make them work and he has made them work for the nation better than any man has ever done before. To do so, he has had to subordinate, on occasion, his own personal views because he has had to bring about the closest possible accommodation between conflicting viewpoints in order to produce constructive legislation.

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Lyndon Johnson is ^{not} interested in issues which may achieve head-

lines. He is interested in results, not talk. And as he has handled a job which calls for accommodation, he is equipped, too, to handle a job which calls for the decisions and actions of one man. And to that I can personally testify. He is a man ever-ready to compromise when that is called for but, equally a man ever-ready to take the responsibility for deciding when that is called for.

This is the man who ^{was} ~~is~~ to address us today. This is the man with whom I work. This is the man with whom I work and work most closely in the United States Senate. This is the man who, when legislation affecting Montana, if reported out by Senator Murray or me, sees to it that it is placed on the calendar and passed by the Senate at the earliest opportunity.

Incidentally, I note in a recent issue of a Montana publication that I am supposed to be supporting Johnson as "job risk insurance." Now the idea seems to be that I am for Johnson because I want to retain the

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position I hold as Majority Whip. I wasn't aware that much pageantry,

publicity, or honor went with the job. I do know that a lot of extra

effort is a part of it. I think you ought to know that I did not seek

but was elected to it by the unanimous vote of my colleagues,
the position of Majority Whip, / I am prepared to get out of that job

whenever my colleagues in the Senate believe that some other arrangement

will better serve the interests of the nation and the Democratic Party.

I took the job and remain in it because I realize the great strain and

pressure that Lyndon Johnson is under and because I want to be of whatever

assistance to him in the Senate that I can. I would be most willing at

any time to relinquish this position--the position I now hold--and to

relinquish it gladly.

I feel the same way about our distinguished Senior Senator,

James E. Murray. I would far rather continue to be the junior Senator

from the State of Montana and have Big Jim at my side than, because of

his voluntary retirement, become the Senior Senator next January. The

only solace in this change is that the man who is coming into the Senate,

the man who will ~~try to~~ fill Senator Murray's shoes, is a man of great

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integrity, great ability and great understanding--a man who will make his mark in the Senate of the United States in the same manner, in the same fashion as have such previous greats, Tom Walsh, Burton Wheeler and the present Senior Senator, James E. Murray.

With these remarks I want to present to this convention a great friend, a great legislator, a great American, a great leader--a man who will make a great President of the United States--the Honorable Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas.